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*Die Eisenbahnen im tropischen Afrika: Eine kolonial-wirtschaftliche Studie.* By HANS MEYER. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1902. 8vo, pp. x + 186.

THE present insurrection in the German colonies will doubtless draw considerable attention to the work of Professor Meyer, who in this book has made a thorough, careful, and conscientious study of a most important phase of the administration of African colonies. Professor Meyer brings to his work not only a knowledge of previous investigations and official reports, but also the results of an actual and extended experience of tropical railroads. The present book takes up each and all of the existing and projected railroads in tropical Africa, including those of Rhodesia, Abyssinia, the territory of the Nile, German Southwest Africa, Angola, the French, English, and Dutch colonies in the basin of the Niger, the Kongo Free State, as well as the railroads in the east African islands — Madagascar, Reunion, and Maritius. For each of the railroads constructed or projected in these several countries Professor Meyer gives an account of the cost of construction, the purpose for which it was built, its financial situation, its rate schedule, its physical characteristics, and its traffic, as well as other important data referring to the past and present status of the lines.

One cannot read Professor Meyer's book without being convinced of the necessity of a certain degree of caution in projecting railroads in this huge territory. Of course, the object in constructing lines in these tropical lands has not primarily been the desire to make them directly profitable, but rather to open up and develop the country, if not to serve political ends. The railroads themselves appear for the most part to be lines stretching out from the ocean or from some navigable river to a distance not exceeding 250 miles, or connecting navigable streams by a link of steel. The railroads are for the most part narrow-gauged, but, upon the whole, their construction has been expensive. About one-fourth of them appear to have averaged a cost of about \$35,000, about one-half from \$40,000 to \$60,000, and the remaining one-fourth from \$60,000 to \$105,000 per mile.

Notwithstanding high freight rates, against which the planters have everywhere complained, the railroads are not generally profitable. There is only one of all the railroads of Africa which earns interest upon its whole capital, and in many cases the receipts are smaller than the cost of operation. Freight rates are high as a result

of insufficient traffic. The average freight rate in tropical Africa appears to be about four cents per ton-mile, but in some cases rates rise as high as seventeen cents per ton-mile.

The greatest difficulty in the development of railroads in the tropics, as in that of industry in general, is the indolence and poverty of the natives. In the construction of the railroads it has been found difficult to obtain a sufficient number of employees willing to work, and it is characteristic of the spirit in which the difficulties of tropical colonization are being met that Professor Meyer suggests that the construction of railroads should be by forced, though paid, labor. This labor, he says, is not slavery, which he describes as compulsory work intended to serve the personal selfish aims of the employer, but he regards it in the same light as compulsory school attendance or compulsory military service, and as a necessary step toward the attainment and preservation of public cultural advantages.

The work of Professor Meyer will be of value to persons interested in the development of tropical colonies. There is appended an excellent map of Africa with its existing and proposed railroads.

WALTER E. WEYL.

UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT,  
New York City.

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*Die Akkordarbeit in Deutschland.* By LUDWIG BERNHARD.  
Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1903. 8vo, pp. vii + 237.

THE author uses *Akkordarbeit* in so broad a sense that it is difficult to find an English equivalent for it. Every form of wage payment based upon results rather than upon the time employed is included in the term: piece-work and task-work in their various forms, the premium system, and profit-sharing, all come within the author's survey, though not to receive the same measure of attention.

The first part traces the development of *Akkordarbeit* during the nineteenth century in England and on the continent. Down to 1830 the tendency in England was to displace time-wages with piece-wages, but piece-wages under a vicious boss system which enabled a small contractor to secure the advantages of the method for himself without sharing them with the workers he employed usually for time-wages. In fact, the laborers suffered all the evils of the sweating system. The conditions in England during the first few decades after the industrial revolution began—the general employment of